

PROMOTING – A BASE COMPONENT OF THE MARKETING MIX IN MUSEUMS. CASE STUDY: THE MUSEUM OF THE ROMANIAN PEASANT

Ruxandra Irina POPESCU

University Lecturer, Ph.D.

Management Faculty, Academy of Economic Studies, Bucharest

ruxandra.irina@gmail.com

Rezumat

Muzeul Țăranului Român se înscrie în familia europeană a Muzeelor de Arte și Tradiții Populare. Este un muzeu național, patronat de Ministerul Culturii. Posesorul unor colecții de obiecte deosebit de bogate, adăpostit într-o clădire-monument istoric, în stil neo-românesc, practică o muzeografie cu totul aparte, care i-a prilejuit în anul 1996 onoarea atribuirii trofeului EMYA - European Museum of the Year Award.

Cuvinte cheie: instituții culturale, muzeele, mixul de marketing, promovarea.

Abstract

The Museum of the Romanian Peasant is part of the European museums family of Art and Popular Traditions. It is a national museum which is under the patronage of the Ministry of Culture, being the owner of some extremely rich object collections, housed in a building – historic monument, in a neo-Romanian style, it practices a distinct museum science, which brought it the honor of being awarded the EMYA (European Museum of the Year Award) trophy in 1996.

Keywords: Cultural Institutions, Museums, the Marketing Mix, promoting.

JEL Classification: M39

1. MARKETING IN MUSEUMS

The museums and the cultural monuments have been introduced on an economic market that is more than unfamiliar to them. They are not just subject to rigorous economic analysis, but also they can be observed from a financial perspective: operating budgets, workforce demand, commercial returns, number of visitors, acquisitions' value... It is true that today one can talk about a museum industry and about institutions as "cultural enterprises", putting the museum administrators in the same light as company managers (Sandell and Janes, 2007).

We can observe the simultaneous and more and more obvious involvement of museums in all marketing mechanisms, through the use of new management technologies required by the changes in the environment and by the rising complexity of the problems addressed (exhibitions planning, funds collecting, budget, use of information technology, etc.). As institutions in the whole cultural sector –

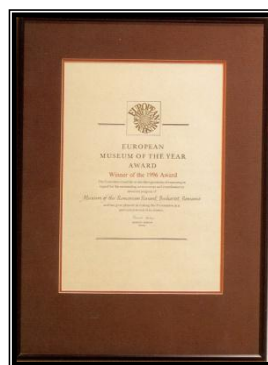
museums have become over time very concerned regarding the business environment, especially referring to these aspects: costs, financing, evaluation, development and profitability. Therefore, economy (a mostly theoretic area) and management (that has a higher grade of applicability) have achieved more and more legitimacy in an area in which they were quite excluded: CULTURE (Sandell and Janes, 2007). These new ways of thinking have brought in their traditional analysis instruments and especially the use of statistical methods and economic modeling.

2. THE MUSEUM...

According to the website <http://www.muzeultaranuluiroman.ro>, the Museum of the Romanian Peasant is a public institution of culture, in the service of society and open to the public, that has objectives like research, collecting cultural goods, evidence, conservation, their restoration, and capitalization of the cultural heritage owned, through exhibitions, publications and any other forms of communication to the public. It is organized so to harmonize the activities of a museum with those of an ethnologic research centre.

In the Museum of the Romanian Peasant the visitor is invited to discover the face of a complex peasant. The museum science suitable for this option can only be a museum science based on of research, one that opposes routine, clichés or recipes. The Museum of the Romanian Peasant proposes a fresh, simple subtle and discrete museum science in which primes the accent on looking and the respect for traditional objects and for the mobility of their world.

The Museum of the Romanian Peasant is not an “ethnographic museum” in the classic sense of the word. On contraire, open to transformations and the “present time” in such an extent that can be considered scandalous to classic museographers, the Museum of the Romanian Peasant wishes to keep a solid and permanent anchorage in this archetypal “model” (Bernea, Nicolau and Hluță, 2003).



In fact, this vision more universal than particular-ethnographic brought the big international recognition from 1996: the EMYA¹ prize for the best European museum of the year. On the other hand, by the means of the temporary exhibitions and it's old and recent collections, by its already traditional events and promoting the “products of the Romanian peasant”, by its activities involving children and old people, by the diversity of its cultural actions (book launches and debates, concerts and anthropologic

¹ European Museum of the Year Award.

movies, colloquiums and cultural evenings etc.) the Museum of the Romanian Peasant tries to permanently maintain itself under the spotlights (www.muzeultranuluiroman.ro).

3. THE POLICY OF PROMOTING

Before talking about the real policy of promoting it is necessary to shortlist the programs involving the public, to better familiarize ourselves with the dimension of the museum's activity (Zbucnea, 2005):

- a) **events with the occasion of holidays that have a special meaning for traditional Romanian spirituality** (Easter Holidays, Saint Ilie etc.). These events attract a lot of people, even though there is a tax perceived for every visit. At the event takes part not only traditional craftsmen, but also artists that sell traditional products or products made in a traditional way. There are organized sometimes additional events such as concerts or traditional dances. Unfortunately, these events have no particular educational aspect, the organizers are not sending in any structured way any information that would improve the visitors knowledge, to determine them to better understand the life of the village or the life of the traditional craftsmen, certain crafts etc;
- b) **the big event for the little ones** and special events dedicated to children for the 1st of June;
- c) **the participation of educational institutions and NGOs** for the institutionalized children at the events organized by the museum;
- d) **children exhibitions** (drawing, painting), held in the museum's spaces;
- e) **sustaining lessons in schools by the specialists that present the museum's thematic.** The fields include: museum science, anthropology, ethnography, ethnology, lore, traditional crafts, traditional art in its various components etc.;
- f) **undertake some thematic lessons about the traditional popular culture.** The lessons can be taught by the professors in schools or by the museum specialists (museographers, researchers etc.) and are followed by debates regarding the particular theme of the lesson;
- g) undertaking in the museum spaces of **optional courses** during a semester or a year;
- h) **holiday programs** (in addition to the museum specialists from the Creativity Workshop are also invited peasant craftsmen to teach different crafts in the same traditional way from long ago). For example, in the summer of 2005 the programs offered were: photography lessons,

drawing and peasant traditional stories, sewing-imprinting, painting on wood and glass. Those interested could participate to only one lesson or a whole cycle.

As it can be observed a special attention is given to children programs, as well as to the institutions and NGOs for the institutionalized children (for them all services are free). For the programs two special places have been designed: The Village School and the Creativity Workshop. From these two the Village School is a distinct space because it resembles to classroom from a school in the rural area.

Regarded by its mission the Museum of the Romanian Peasant is an educational-cultural institution. In order to fulfill its meaning it must come in permanent contact with the public, it must efficiently communicate with it.

The communication activity with different kinds of public must be a constant preoccupation to the museum. This activity sends messages that have the meaning of informing the public, as well to educate and to attract it into cultural actions.

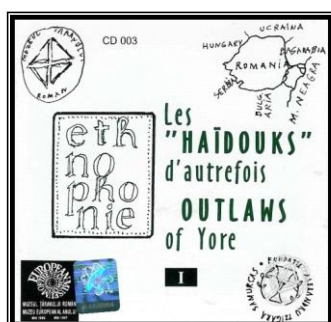
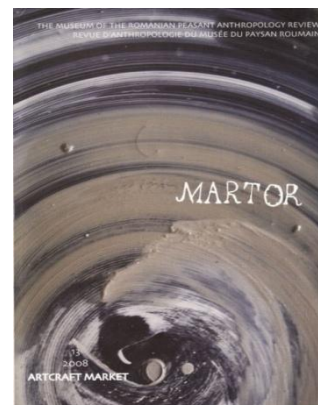
In the Museum of the Romanian Peasant the **public communication** is done using the “If you come back...” program. This program includes the following communication activities:

- 1) **The Creativity Workshop:** on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, from 10:00 till 14:00, during the whole second semester, children are awaited to ethnology workshops (7-14 years old), clay modeling (5-18 years old), sewing (12-18 years old), photography (14-18 years old), to visits and lectures in the museum's halls. Registrations are made through schools, kindergartens and foundations. The Creativity Workshop is a museum project since 2002, and through it the museum wishes to offer children an alternative or complementary education to that from schools. Through these courses, the little ones gain knowledge about the village, the peasants, the customs, and they develop practical abilities, learning to make with their own hands various objects.
- 2) **The Visual Observatory** is a recent program of the Museum of the Romanian Peasant, launched by the Department of Visual Anthropology. It includes periodical meetings with young people who love photography and video-documentaries, so to communicate and debate visual discourses on a specific theme.
- 3) **The Village School** where lessons, debates, screenings and auditions are carried out. Between 12:00 – 14:00, every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday the visual memory archive made real by the Visual Arts Foundation can be consulted and one can look at

everything that today still exists from the Romanian popular traditions. At the Village School can participate persons of all ages.

Promoting represents the effort made by the Museum of the Romanian Peasant to present its offer in a favorable way so to sell faster and as much as possible. The promoting means used by the museum are:

From 2007 its own publisher, **Witness**. But, back from 1991 one of the priorities of the museum was the editing of publications in its own style, which is nearer to the concept of book-object (<http://www.muzeultaranuluiroman.ro>). A lot of titles signed by the researchers and the museographers were published. Some editions quickly sold-out, while others can still be found in the museum's library: specialist books (ethnology and lore, anthropology, sociology, museum science), bibliographic publications in limited editions, album-books, magazines, calendars, papers, booklets, maps, posters, agendas. The annual anthropology and museum science magazine, **Witness**, publication that is at the 13th issue, debates in every issue current problems in the field and the museum science related experiments.

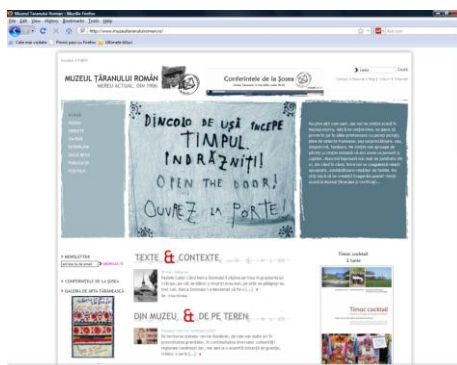


Ethnophonie is a CD collection edited by the Peasant Museum with the support of Alexandru Tzigara Samurcaș Foundation, which builds an image of the traditional oral music from Romania and from the neighboring countries. The collection contains village and town music of the Romanians, but also Magyars, gypsies, Jews, Ukrainians and a-Romanians. The interpreters are musicians, groups and elite popular ensembles. Among them some

celebrities: the group "Haidouks" from Clejani, the ensemble "Zece Prăjini", the group "Ardealul" from Gherla, the Iza ensemble from Maramureș. The discs are accompanied by bilingual booklets that include information, ethnologic commentaries, lyrics and photographs. Ethnophonie is a highly qualitative collection, awarded with Western distinctions: The Charles Cross Academy – France (2005) and the Prize of the German Critics of Discs (2007).



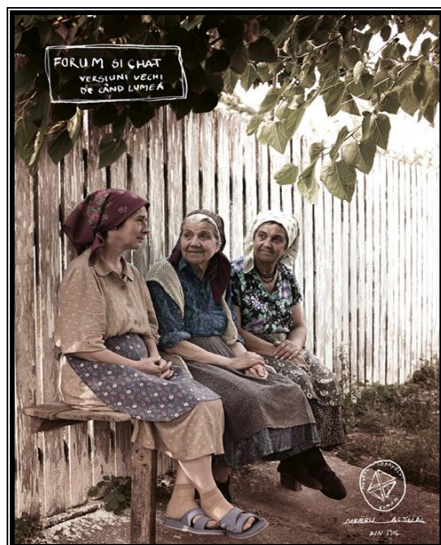
The Website presents general information about the museum, its objects, and important people of the museum, the list of temporary exhibitions, events, communication and promoting activities, publications, as well as a movie promoting the museum's image. Also, on the website are published articles, and are promoted future exhibitions. Using the website, interested persons can subscribe to a newsletter, for continuous information.



In 2006, the Museum of the Romanian Peasant launched a **promoting campaign**, in collaboration with Mercury Promotions, under the name **"The Museum of the Romanian Peasant. Always current. From 1906"** and it represented a trial to rediscover the Museum and to describe it "in another way" to the public. Through this campaign Mercury Promotions tried to anchor the Museum of the Romanian Peasant as a beacon as current as possible, and so it proposed in the TV spots and visuals some steep, but also amusing and friendly perspectives of some recognizable situations in the day to day lives of the people that they wanted in the museum. For example, the TV spot attracts the attention to the oldness of communication customs named nowadays modern "forum and chat". Women from rural areas that are chatting can easily be imagined making the same conversation using an instant messaging system. This juxtaposing of contexts – the rural one from which the "hot stuff" can not missed, such as leading the cow or the peasant clothes and the modern one, of discussions conducted in the virtual realm – clink "x has joined the conference" – concludes immediately "The forum and the chat date as old as the world. And the Museum of the Romanian Peasant is always current".



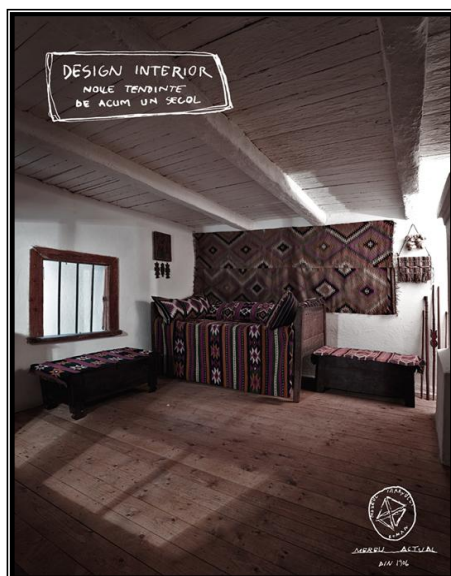
POSTER – THE CAMPAIGN "THE MUSEUM OF THE ROMANIAN PEASANT. ALWAYS CURRENT. FROM 1906.", 2006



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4. CONCLUSION

The museum promoting campaign attracted the attention on the museum, brought to the attention of the public aspects that it didn't know they existed and determined the most diverse people to visit the museum. But the beneficial effects mentioned were not so important and wouldn't have recorded rising tendencies if the promotional message wouldn't have been supported by a good offer. As a result of synergic effects of diversification and dinamization of the offer, of the new educational activities proposed and the varied efforts for promoting the museum and its offer, it has an important number of trusted visitors. Most of them are families with children, part of the middle class. These trusted visitors are extremely important not only for the realization of the museum's cultural and educational mission, but also because of the fact that they bring to the museum, in different occasions, friends and those they know.

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